Access to Indians in Pakistani jails

*164. DR. M.A.M. RAMASWAMY: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Indians held in Pakistan presently on various charges;

(b) whether Government have any access to these Indians;

(c) what steps Government propose to take to ensure that there is regular communication among these Indian prisoners and their families in India;

(d) whether any agreement has been worked out with Pakistan to humanize this issue; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI RAO INDERJIT SINGH): (a) According to available information, there are about 923 civilian prisoners, 371 fishermen and 54 Prisoners of War in Pakistani jails. However, Pakistan has acknowledged the presence of 182 civilian prisoners only and does not acknowledge presence of any Indian POWs in Pakistan.

(b) Yes, Sir. During 2005, Government of Pakistan has granted consular access to Indian prisoners in January, February, June and July.

(c) Indian prisoners in Pakistan are allowed to write and receive letters from their families in India.

(d) and (e) The matters regarding Indian prisoners in Pakistan are consistently taken up with Pakistan Government through diplomatic channels and high level contacts from time to time.

During the Foreign Secretary level talks held on December 27-28, 2004 at Islamabad it was agreed that immediate notification would be provided to the respective High Commissions through the Foreign Minsitries of the arrested Indian/Pakistani nationals, consular access would be given to all the civilian prisoners (including fishermen) held in each other's country within three months from the date of their arrest and repatriation would be done immediately after completion of sentence and nationality verification.

During the visit of External Affairs Minister to Pakistan from February 15-17, 2005 and during the visit of President of Pakistan to India from April

16-18, 2005, the issue of early release and repatriation of all the Indian fishermen along with their boats was taken up.

Provision of overloading to washeries

†*169. SHRI RAMADHAR KASHYAP: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether overloading is provided by S.E.C.L. in Chhattisgarh to two coal washeries;

(b) if so, whether these coal washeries use State highways for transportation;

(c) whether rules under Motor Vehicles Act are not being violated by providing such overloading; and

(d) if so, the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL (DR. DASARI NARAYAN RAO): (a) Yes, Sir. As reported by Coal India Limited, coal is loaded beyond the capacity of trucks in case of two coal washeries located in the lease-hold area of South Eastern Coalfields Limited, Gevra area by one stroke loading facility.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) and (d) The roads inside the mine leasehold area are constructed and maintained by SECL. For operational efficiency, trucks transporting coal to the washeries and sidings located inside the mine leasehold area are being allowed to carry quantity of coal more than the registered carrying capacity. The responsibility for any damage to the road and its safety lies with the company for which company is taking appropriate measures. Wheares, any loaded truck transporting coal outside the mine leasehold area where State Highways or National Highways are involved, in such cases, the load carried by the truck is restricted to their carrying capacity indicated in the Registration book under the provisions of Motor Vehicles Act.

Demarcation of five points alongwith the LoC

*171. SHRIMATI HEMA MALINI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Pakistan has rejected the proposal on demarcation of five points alowngwith the LoC;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.